



The GSChronicles

March 2009

Table of Contents

Upcoming Events
Announcements
Graduate Student Spotlight:
Candace Pfefferkorn
GSC Meeting Overview
Science Policy Headlines
Tip of the Month
Grad Student Entertainment

Upcoming Events

April

- 2 International Opportunities Expo, 12:30-4PM
- 3 Workshop: Grant Writing Part 2, 9-11:30AM
- 6 GSC Meeting, 4PM, Bldg 50 Rm 1328/1334
- 7 Community Service: Manna Food Packing
- 8 Campus Triad Lunch, 12PM
- 9 SNIG, 4PM
- 16 GS3, 1-2PM
- 17 Pathways: K99 Grant Seminar
- 18 Community Service: Relay for Life

May

- 19 NIH Career Symposium
- 25 Memorial Day
- 27 Community Service: Children's Inn Meal

Announcements

■ GSC Meeting:

The next GSC meeting will be held on Monday, **April 6th at 4PM in Bldg 50 Rm 1328/1334**. The room and time change allow us to video conference with students at both RML and Baltimore. The normal refreshments will still be provided. Students in **Baltimore** can participate by going to the 5th floor conference room of the BRC. For **RML** students, the videoconference will be: RML Bldg 11 conference room (at **2PM MST**).

■ Updated GSC Constitution:

The Graduate Student Council Constitution has been updated. Please check out the new version: <http://gpp.nih.gov/Current/GraduateStudentCouncil/GSCCommittees/GSCConstitutionDraft.htm>

■ New! Dissertation Discussion Group:

Are you currently writing your dissertation? Are you interested in discussing the progress you're making (or the writer's block you're experiencing) while writing your dissertation with your fellow graduate students? Let's get together and chat and share our experiences as a group. Sign up for the Dissertation Discussion Group and we'll find a

day to meet informally but regularly to support each other through this process. All grad students at the NIH currently writing (or getting ready to start writing) their dissertation are welcome to participate. Sign up here:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=BzJCSMfl2blivPoflhpOew_3d_3d.

■ April Campus Triad Lunch:

NIH graduate students meet monthly for lunch at various cafeterias across the NIH campus. The next Triad Lunch for those on NIH main campus will be on Wednesday, **April 8th at 12 noon** in the Bldg 1, Bldg 10/B1, and Bldg 35 cafeterias. Please join your Campus Area mailing list at <http://gpp.nih.gov/Current/GraduateStudentCouncil/GSCListServes/>.

■ GSX Listserv:

The Graduate Student Exchange (GSX) is a social listserv for grad students at NIH. Postings for roommates, items for sale, and social outings are common. It's a great way to connect to fellow grad students. To join the group, visit <http://gpp.nih.gov/Current/GraduateStudentCouncil/GSCListServes/>.

■ Community Service:

Give back to the community with other GSC students at Manna Food box packing on **April 7th** and at the Relay for Life (see below). Also, mark your calendar for **Wednesday, May 27th**, when we will cook and serve dinner at the Children's Inn on NIH main campus. Contact GSCservice@od.nih.gov with any questions or to sign up.

Saturday, April 18: Relay for Life

Join the team of NIH Graduate Students that will be spending the day (and night!) at the 2009 American Cancer Society Relay for Life at GWU. If you can't walk with us, help us to raise \$500. Check out the team website at: http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLFY09SA?team_id=362801&pg=team&fr_id=12639&et=0ZtoN5wkKQTP_x_hamCNGQ..&s_tafid=243467. To find out more, contact Matt Berberich, Team Leader, at mjberberich@yahoo.com.

■ GS3:

The **Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS3)** is a monthly meeting where students present their work to fellow graduate students. The GS3 Committee is now scheduling speakers for our

Graduate Student Seminar Series for the remainder of the 2009. Just fill out the GS3 Entry Form at <http://gpp.nih.gov/NR/rdonlyres/82279534-3D48-4AD4-9D53-01F61A638353/19603/GS3FormatForm.doc> and submit it to GSCgs3@od.nih.gov in order to be considered for this unique seminar series!

The next meeting will be **Thursday, April 16th, 1-2PM** in the **Grad Student Lounge** (Bldg. 10, Rm. 6S235A); *please note room change*. The theme will be Topics in Immunology, with speakers Lydia Durant (Oxford/NIAMS) and Sophia Cleland (GWU/NIAMS). Light refreshments will be provided.

▪ **BSBIG:**
The Biophysics and Structural Biology Graduate Student Interest Group has been meeting bimonthly. The first meeting of the month focuses on learning a new laboratory technique, whereas the second meeting of the month is used to discuss a paper that uses the technique. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, contact GSCstructbiol@od.nih.gov.

▪ **SNIG:**
The **Systems Neuroscience Interest Group for Graduate Students** is a group of students interested in systems/ cognitive/ clinical neuroscience. The next meeting will be on **Thursday, April 9th at 4pm** in the graduate student lounge (Bldg 10, Room 6S235A). Anke Karabanov will be speaking; everyone is welcome to attend. To learn more about SNIG, please visit: <http://gpp.nih.gov/Current/GraduateStudentCouncil/GSCCommittees/Academic.htm#SNIG>. If you are interested in joining SNIG or have questions, please email GSCsnig@od.nih.gov.

▪ **Thesis Committee:**
Graduate students present their dissertation research to the NIH Community. This thesis seminar is an opportunity to celebrate with colleagues who contributed to the graduate student's achievement and to introduce the student and his/her work to other scientists with similar research interests. Please contact GSCthesis@od.nih.gov if you would like to schedule a defense at NIH.

Happy Birthday to: Brett Spurrier (Mar 2nd), Tyler Ard (Mar 2nd), Rayna Carter (Mar 5th), Marieke Mur (Mar 18th), Sandra Dunn (Mar 19th), Sandra Dillahun (Mar 31st).

Upcoming Birthdays: Geoffrey Lynn (Apr 3rd), Brenna Hill (Apr 4th), Matt Berberich (Apr 5th), Abbi

Engel (Apr 9th), Julia James (Apr 17th), Yuxia Cui (Apr 18th), Catherine Schwartz (Apr 19th), Mark Gregory (Apr 19th), Chanelle Case (Apr 20th), Heather Huson (Apr 26th).

Please **send your publications, awards, graduation, and birthday announcements** to GSCChronicles@od.nih.gov for recognition.

Graduate Student Spotlight



Candace Pfefferkorn

Candace grew up in West Friendship in Howard County, Maryland. Her hometown, best characterized by dwindling farmland and new housing developments, also boasts the largest annual gathering of Sheep and Wool enthusiasts in the United States.

She attended Gettysburg College to pursue a double major in music (flute) and physics. While in college, Candace performed summer research in the Physics Laboratory at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. In Summer 2004, she worked in the Laser Cooling and Trapping Group, where she learned to use optical tweezers to create stable polymer nanotubes. In Summer 2005, Candace moved to the Laser Applications Group in order to do THz absorption spectroscopy on crystalline dipeptides. She also participated in two observing trips to the Lowell Observatory in Arizona to take measurements at the National Undergraduate Research Telescope.

In addition to science-related research, Candace participated in multiple music groups, including

Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, Woodwind Quintet, and the Pennsylvania Intercollegiate Band. Integrating her quantitative background into her interest in music, her music theory research focused on applying a mathematical analysis to the 12-tone serial compositions of Anton Webern.

While she can't remember the exact time or place when she decided she wanted to pursue science, she has always been fascinated by nature. As Candace comments, "It is no surprise that science picked me."

The intrigue of nature eventually brought Candace to a Chemical Physics Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, College Park. A third-year graduate student, she is currently researching in Jennifer Lee's laboratory in the Laboratory of Molecular Biophysics, NHLBI. Her research involves the use of spectroscopic tools, including steady-state and time-resolved fluorescence methods, to explore protein conformation and protein-membrane interactions. She specifically focuses on the site-specific determination of α -synuclein membrane binding and amyloid formation.

Candace is the GSC formal partnership representative for the University of Maryland, College Park partnership programs in Biophysics and in Sensory & Communication Neuroscience, and also serves on the 2009 graduate student retreat committee.

When not researching, Candace finds time to play the flute and to backpack. Some of her fondest memories include playing in orchestral concerts and ascending peaks on the Appalachian Trail. While typically rewarding, her love for hiking has led her into some compromising situations. Hiking in Shenandoah National Park, Candace suddenly realized she was sandwiched between a mother bear and her cubs. She remarks, "Let's just say that was a fast walk back to the trail head."

GSC Meeting Overview: 03/02/09

The April 6th GSC meeting will be held in Building 50, Rm 1328/1334, 4-5PM. All future meetings will be held there.

GPP Notes:

- Sharon Milgram will speak next month about external evaluation of GPP (20-30 min with Q&A). Needs student feedback.
- Kim Baxter will be GSC representative for new Student Center planning committee.

Academic Committee:

- Email Betsey Wade or Kate Callahan to lead summer journal club.
- Kate Szarama joined FAES technique course committee.
- May extend teleconferencing to future interest group meetings if GSC and GS3 meetings go well.
- Spring Career Symposium will occur May 19th.

Community Service:

- Manna Food Packing: April 7th
- Relay for Life: April 18-19th
- Cooking and serving dinner at Children's Inn, May 27th

Public Relations Committee:

- Website: Update website by filling out submission form on GSX to Christina Saikus. Updates will happen Thursday morning.
- GSX: Email Julien Debbache to make changes to dates on events calendar.

Symposium Committee:

- Nancy Wexler will be invited to be keynote speaker.

Thesis Committee:

- Website in development. Handout detailing 10 things to do in preparation for a thesis talk distributed. Please contact GSCthesis@od.nih.gov if you want to give a talk.

New Business:

- Letters sent to congress to encourage legislation to make childcare for IRTAs possible.
- Committee photos taken.

Science Policy Headlines

The GSChronicles editorial team is proud to introduce this new section to the newsletter. Each month, we will highlight a few science policy news stories which are relevant to the general scientific community. If you have suggestions regarding this column, or if you would like to contribute a headline of interest, please email GSChronicles@od.nih.gov.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009:

- **Provisions:** \$21.5 billion in additional funds for scientific programs, with \$10.4 billion (roughly one third of standard operating budget) allocated to the NIH.
- **Goal:** Promote job conservation and growth, as well as stimulate scientific discovery and innovation.
- **Why you should care:** The NIH intramural program received specific funding for building maintenance and construction- expect more tractors and new facilities. Find more

information at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h1enr.pdf.

Removing barriers to responsible scientific research involving human stem cells (Executive Order):

- **Order:** Lift ban on federal funding for research involving human embryonic stem cells.
- **Goal:** Support stem cell research, as such studies might elucidate the mechanisms and potential treatments of debilitating diseases; sustain American global leadership in scientific innovation and discovery.
- **Why you should care:** The ban represents one of many governmental interventions related to scientific pursuits. President Obama officially delivered what he implies is the first of several reversals along the government-science interface. He directed the NIH to draft guidelines within four months under which researchers may apply for federal funding for studies involving the hundreds of previously restricted human embryonic stem cell lines. Several states, including California, New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, have chosen to independently fund stem cell research for several years. Find more information at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Removing-Barriers-to-Responsible-Scientific-Research-Involving-Human-Stem-Cells/.

Tip of the Month:

NIH Library Writing Center

Find yourself in need of someone to help you edit your paper, protocol or PowerPoint presentation? The NIH Library in Building 10 has opened up their new Writing Center. There is physical space allocated for quiet writing, and you can request personal assistance from a Writing Center Team librarian for manuscript editing. The Writing Center website (<http://nihlibrary.nih.gov/ResearchTools/WritingCenter.htm>) also provides links directing you to copyright, publishing and other useful information. For more about the NIH Library Writing Center and to request an appointment for editing help, call 301-496-1080 or email the Writing Center Team at nihlibwct-l@mail.nih.gov.

Graduate Student Entertainment

Have you ever wondered what chemical reactions would look like if the elements were anthropomorphized and placed in a party setting? Well, neither have the editors of this newsletter, but the European Commission for Research has brought this vision to life anyway in an amusing and upbeat video. Thanks to Emmette Hutchison for the link!

http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/mariecurious/chemical_party_video.htm

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